

REMARKS

This Amendment is submitted in response to the outstanding Office Action dated February 7, 2005, wherein the Examiner rejected claims 1-23, all the claims pending in the application. Reconsideration of the application in view of the amendments made herein and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

As an initial matter, Applicant has amended paragraphs 17, 40, 47, 68 and 69 in accordance with the Examiner's suggestions and in order to overcome the informalities noted by the Examiner. Accordingly, the Examiner's objection to the specification is no longer applicable.

In addition, the Examiner objected to claim 3 since the cleaning element was not affirmatively recited in independent claim 1. In response, amended claim 1 now affirmatively recites the cleaning element. Accordingly, claim 3 (also amended) no longer includes any informalities.

Claim 23, also objected to by the Examiner, has been cancelled.

Amended claim 1 defines the inventive cleaning apparatus as including a cleaning element support, a cleaning element removably mounted about the support, a rotatable handle coupled to the support, power drive means for rotating the support, clamp means carried on the support for clamping the cleaning element in a fixed position on the support, and a slot formed along the support for selectively receiving the clamp means. Nowhere in the prior art identified by the Examiner is this combination described or taught.

Arguably, the only reference relied upon by the Examiner in which he argues that there is a teaching of a clamp member releasably mounted in a slot is the patent Teren. Reference is made to page 4 of the Office Action. Referring to Fig. 2 in Teren, the Teren description states at column 3, lines 55-60, that inner wall 45 of holder component 44

includes a plurality of slots for receiving protruding portions 37a and 38a of a mandrel spring 36 for "releasable interlocking engagement." As discussed at lines 27-32 of column 3 in Teren, spring portions 37a and 38a of mandrel spring 36 are used for locking engagement with tool member 39 when shoulder 40 is brought into engagement with tool member 39. In other words, the clamp means that the Examiner identifies in Teren as mandrel spring 36 is received in slot 49 in order to facilitate locking engagement of tool member 39 with mandrel 30 (See Fig. 2). This engagement has no relevance to securing the scouring pad (the cleaning element) 42 along wall 41 of tool member 39 (the cleaning element support).

In contrast, as recited in amended claim 1, the clamp of the inventive cleaning apparatus is received in a slot formed in the cleaning element support in order to clamp the cleaning element in a fixed position on the support. This is needed since the cleaning element may be in the form of a sheet, or may be tubular, and therefore is removably mountable about the support. In order to ensure that the cleaning element is fixed in position on the support after appropriate mounting, the inventive apparatus includes a clamp that is received in a slot formed along the support as it clamps the cleaning element in fixed position. This is not what is taught in the Teren reference.

Independent claim 28 recites that there is a slot formed along the support and that ends of the cleaning element are spaced from one another and are selectively mounted in the slot. The Teren reference does not teach a cleaning element (scouring pad 42) having ends that are received in a slot formed in the support to facilitate fixed engagement of the cleaning element about the support.

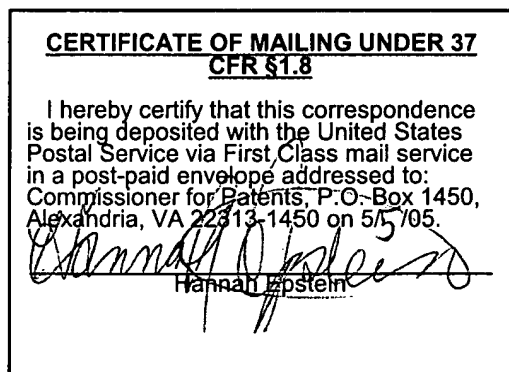
Finally, new independent claim 34 recites the combined features of the opposed ends of the cleaning element being selectively mounted in a slot of the cleaning element, and a clamping device receivable in said slot for securing the cleaning element in fixed position on the support. This combination is neither described nor taught in Teren.

The remaining references relied upon by the Examiner are of little relevance. According to the Examiner, in the patent to Root, there is some type of clamp means on the support for clamping the cleaning element in fixed position. While the teaching of Root, in Applicant's view, does not describe any type of clamp means, there is certainly no teaching or suggestion of a slot formed along the support for receiving a clamp means or opposed ends of a cleaning element. Accordingly, the Root patent is of little relevance.

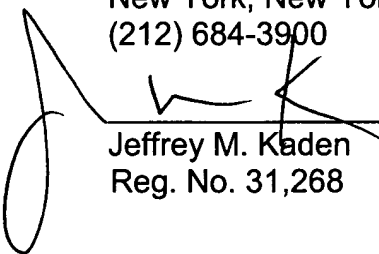
The remaining references to Gains, Lesetar and Hoffman, also relied upon by the Examiner in the Office Action, neither teach nor suggest the combination of features now recited in the amended claims.

Accordingly, it is submitted that claims 1, 3, 5, 7, 13, 17-19 and 24 -34 are directed to allowable subject matter

Early and favorable action is respectfully requested.



Respectfully submitted,
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